

THE  
NATURE, DESIGN,  
AND  
GENERAL RULES  
OF THE  
UNITED SOCIETIES  
IN  
LONDON, BRISTOL, KINGSWOOD,  
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, &c.  
TO WHICH ARE ADDED  
THE RULES  
OF THE  
BAND SOCIETIES.

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## RULES of the SOCIETY.

1. **I**N the latter end of the Year 1739, eight or ten Persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for Redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together; which from thenceforward they did every week; viz. on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily) I gave those advices from time to time which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

2. This was the rise of the UNITED SOCIETY, first in London and then in other places. Such a Society is no other than  
 “ A company of men having the form, and  
 “ seeking the power of godliness: united,  
 “ in order to pray together, to receive the  
 “ word of exhortation, and to watch over

“ one another in love, that they may help  
“ each other to work out their salvation.”

3. That it may the more easily be discerned, whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each Society is divided in to smaller companies, called Classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in every Class; one of whom is stiled the Leader.—It is his business,

I. To see each Person in his Class, once a week at least, in order

To enquire how their souls prosper;

To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require;

To receive what they are willing to give, toward the support of the Gospel.

II. To meet the Minister, and the Stewards of the Society once a week, in order

To inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reprov'd.

To pay to the Stewards what they have received of their several Classes in the week preceding: And

To shew their Account of what each person has contributed.

4. There is one only condition previously required of those who desire admission into these Societies, namely, *a Desire to flee from*



*from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins :*" but wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shewn by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their Desire of Salvation,

First, By doing no harm, by avoiding Evil in every kind: especially, that which is most generally practised. Such as

The taking the Name of GOD in vain:

The profaning the Day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling :

Drunkenness, *buying or selling spirituous liquors ; or drinking them,* unless in cases of extreme necessity :

*Fighting, quarrelling, brawling ; brother going to law with brother ; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing : the using many words in buying or selling :*

The *buying or selling unaccustomed goods :*

The *giving or taking things on usury, i. e. unlawful interest :*

*Uncharitable or unprofitable Conversation :* particularly speaking evil of magistrates, or of ministers :

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us :

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God : As

The *putting on of gold or costly Apparel :*

The *taking such Diversions* as cannot be used in the Name of the Lord Jesus :

The *singing those songs, or reading those Books*, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God :

Softness, and needless self-indulgence :

Laying up treasure upon earth :

Borrowing without a probability of paying ; or taking up Goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of Salvation,

Secondly, By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity ; doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all Men ;

To their Bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving Food to the Hungry, by clothing the Naked, by visiting or helping them that are Sick, or in Prison.

To their Souls, by instructing, *reproving*, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with : trampling under foot that enthusiastic Doctrine of evils, that “ We are not to do good, unless *our Hearts be free to it.*”

By doing good especially to them that are of the Household of Faith, or groaning so to be: employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in Business : and so much the more, because  
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the World will love its own, and them *only*.

By all possible *Diligence and Frugality*, that the Gospel be not blamed.

By running with Patience the Race that is set before them, *denying themselves and taking up their cross daily*; submitting to bear the Reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world; and looking that Men should *say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake*.

6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their Desire of Salvation:

Thirdly, By attending on all the Ordinances of God: such are

The public Worship of God:

The Ministry of the Word, either read or expounded:

The Supper of the Lord:

Family and private Prayer:

Searching the Scriptures: and

Fasting or Abstinence.

7. These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, the only Rule, and the sufficient Rule both of our Faith and Practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they  
that

that must give an account. We will admonish him of the Error of his ways: We will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

May 1.

JOHN WESLEY.

1743.

CHARLES WESLEY.

N. B. Let a Fast Day be observed in all our Societies, the last Friday in August, November February, and May.

*FINIS.*

RULES



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# RULES

OF THE

## BAND SOCIETIES,

Drawn up December 25, 1738.

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**T**HE design of our meeting, is to obey that command of God, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.*

To this end, we intend,

1. To meet once a week, at the least.
2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.
3. To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour, with singing or prayer.
4. To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting.
5. To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.
6. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, and temptations.

Some

Some of the questions proposed to every one before he is admitted among us, may be to this effect :

1. Have you the forgiveness of your sins ?
2. Have you peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ ?
3. Have you the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit, that you are a child of God ?
4. Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart ?
5. Has no sin inward or outward, dominion over you ?
6. Do you desire to be told of your faults ?
7. Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home ?
8. Do you desire that every one of us should tell you, from time to time, whatsoever is in his heart concerning you ?
9. Consider : Do you desire, we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you ?
10. Do you desire, that in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom ?
11. Is it your desire and design, to be on this and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak every thing that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve. Any

Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion offers: the four following at every meeting:

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
2. What temptations have you met with?
3. How was you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said or done, of which you doubt it be sin or not?



## D I R E C T I O N S

GIVEN TO THE  
BAND SOCIETIES.

*December 25, 1744.*

**Y**OU are supposed to have the *Faith* that *overcometh the world*. To you therefore it is not grievous,

I. Carefully to abstain from doing evil: in particular,

1. Neither to *buy* or *sell* any thing at all on the Lord's-Day.
2. To taste no spirituous liquor, *no dram* of any kind, unless prescribed by a physician.
3. To be *at a word* both in buying and selling
4. To *pawn nothing*.
5. Not to *mention the fault* of any *behind his back*, and to stop those short that do.
6. To

6. To wear no *needless ornaments*, such as rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace, ruffles.

7. To use no *needless self-indulgence*, such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a physician.

II. Zealously to maintain good works: in particular,

1. To *give alms* of such things as you possess, and that to the uttermost of your power.

2. To *reprove* all that sin in your sight, and that in love, and meekness of wisdom.

3. To be patterns of *diligence* and *frugality*, of *self-denial*, and taking up the cross daily.

III. Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God: in particular,

1. To be at Church, and at the Lord's table every week, and at every public meeting of the Bands.

2. To attend the ministry of the word every morning, unless distance, business, or sickness prevent.

3. To use private prayer every day: and family prayer, if you are the head of a family.

4. To read the scriptures, and meditate therein, at every vacant hour. And,

5. To observe, as days of fasting or abstinence, all *Fridays* in the year.



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